

NATIONAL RECORDER.

Containing Essays upon subjects connected with Political Economy, Science, Literature, &c.; Papers read before the Agricultural Society of Philadelphia; a Record of passing Events; Selections from Foreign Magazines, &c. &c.

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THE MISSOURI QUESTION.

The violent agitation that shook the whole nation during the late discussion of this question, had induced an opinion that the members opposed to the extension of slavery, would shrink from the responsibility of exciting anew the sectional suspicions and animosities, which are still watchful. But in the constitution formed by the candidate for admission into the union, are two provisions but ill calculated to facilitate her reception. Missouri, by a clause, forbidding them to take any measures for the abolition of slavery, has attempted to take from her legislature the power of acting upon better principles, when they shall attain the ascendancy. Another article makes it the duty of the legislature to pass laws preventing the entrance into the state of free negroes and mulattoes. *This* is in palpable opposition to that part of the constitution of the United States, which guarantees to every citizen of any state, the same privileges in other states, as are enjoyed by citizens thereof; and the *former* seems rather foolishly intended to set at defiance the advocates of the restriction.

As it seems, therefore, no longer doubtful that the claims of Missouri will be opposed by a large part of Congress, the question may be considered as open to discussion, and we may take the liberty of offering to our readers a few reflections and opinions upon the important occasion.

In the first place, we earnestly deprecate the acrimony of temper, and the unrestrained expression of zeal, which were indulged during the debate, by many of the opponents of slavery. We do not say that they were without provocation, or that they were as much in fault as was the other side; but angry warmth neither conciliates nor convinces. It is the object of discussion to elicit truth; but this cannot be done by a mode of disputing (we cannot say of reasoning) that makes our opponents less likely to feel or to admit the weight of our arguments. As instances of what we con-

sider wrong in principle and policy, we will mention, that when the alternative was held out by the southern interest, their opponents declared that rather than agree to extend the foul crime, they would forego the advantages of union; and to threats of forcible opposition, they replied with great if not with equal intemperance. If a charitable moderation towards those who differ from us in opinion, were not dictated by sound reason as well as by benevolence, and if there were in the present case no peculiar claims to this modest and affectionate forbearance, a regard to our own wishes, a just sense of policy, should teach us to avoid a course that can never be successful. A sullen and discontented submission on the part of the southern states, an acquiescence with the determination of the majority without any approbation of their reasons and with a distrust of their motives, would be far from satisfying any reasonable philanthropist or good patriot. If we can persuade our brethren to recognise the correctness of the principles upon which we act, the work is done; but to overwhelm them by numbers will do little towards the change of their opinions.

When with evident emotion Mr. Macon, the venerable member from North Carolina, in answer to a zealous speech of a Pennsylvanian, invited him to go home with him to see that *his* slaves were not the miserable beings—and that *he* was not the cruel tyrant—that had been drawn as illustrative of society in the southern states;—when he imagined his own return to his estate, and described the kind greetings that would pass between him and *his people*, we could not but feel an affectionate respect for him, and would cordially have extended to him the right hand of fellowship. There could be no doubt of the sincerity of his opinions or of the benevolence of his heart, and we thought the abolition of slavery itself would be certain, were all slaveholders like him. Would to God that in the approaching trial the same conciliating mildness may be shown by all of that party in this question, whom we con-

sider the advocates of truth. To look for this, however, would be to forget the imperfection of human nature when irritated by opposition and animated by the pride of opinion: but we may hope for much good if only one man can be found who will endeavour to stand between the contending parties, and speak the language of peace. Could there be a better field for the statesman, the orator, the patriot? Animated by the most devoted attachment to the national union, while inflexible in his adherence to the principles of liberty, he would not give railing for railing, nor suffer the taunts of his adversaries to raise an angry spirit within him. When passionately accused of a wish for the dissolution of the union, how great would be the effect of the magnanimity which could call into view the merits of his opponents, and speak with fervour and sincerity of the obligations we owe them for the ardour with which they united with us in the revolution, and for the great men to whom they have given birth; and here he might make a strong appeal to the veneration which is felt by the whole people for the FATHER OF HIS COUNTRY. On such an occasion the affectionate exhortations of the *valedictory address* would not be forgotten.

He would stigmatize as the greatest wickedness, a willingness to throw into jeopardy the hopes of human improvement that have been founded upon the success of our scheme of government. The immediate effects of a division would be disastrous and distressing beyond measure.—Where can the line be drawn, that will not separate father from son, and interrupt the intercourse of friends and brothers? And how can we endure the thought, that in passing from Pennsylvania to Maryland, from Ohio to Kentucky, the passenger must undergo the inspection of public sentries, and feel that he is about to enter a foreign land! He would speak of a civil war as of a conception too monstrous to be uttered. He would say, that in common with millions of his fellow citizens, he would rather that his arm should wither than that it should be lifted against his *countrymen*—a title he should never cease to apply to the whole nation. Far from irritating the pride of his opponents by dwelling upon scenes of servile war and bloody destruction, as the inevitable consequences of a separation, he would declare it to be impossible that in any event his constituents could look upon the progress of a foreign or domestic enemy, without forgetting all differences of opinion, and flying with open

hearts and ready hands to testify that they can never forget the ties which have bound them to the south. With such feelings as these, an advocate of moderation could not be unsuccessful, and the voice of reason would find its way.

There is another part of the discussion of very great importance—we allude to the manner in which it is to be carried on in newspapers, and out of Congress generally. The editors of the public prints should duly consider their duty to society, so to use the influence they possess as to contribute to form correct opinions and promote the welfare of the nation. To this end it would be prudent to avoid all declamation upon cruelty to slaves, all general charges of want of principle, and every thing that may tend to exasperate, and can certainly do nothing to promote the object in view. We notice with much pleasure in a late *National Intelligencer* the following remarks:

“There is one allusion which has touched a chord that vibrates painfully to our feelings. We have no hesitation in avowing it, however we may grieve at the cause. It is to the presumption of the possibility that any party in this country, defeated in the Capitol, will “proceed to extremities, dart from the constitutional sphere, and attempt to dissolve the union.” It was with affliction, rather than surprise, that we heard, on the floor of either house of Congress, during the last session, language which at least admitted the possibility of such a consequence to the imposition of the proposed restriction on Missouri. Sincerely as we regretted the introduction of this question—and still more the discussion of it, some of the consequences of which we but too clearly foresaw—it was with a feeling of dismay that we heard the dissolution of the union mentioned as one of them. Making due allowance for the excitement of those who heard, in fancy, the agonizing shrieks of the wives of their bosom and the children of their love, butchered by the hands of infuriated menials—of those who thought they saw the knife at their throat, and the torch at their door—it were scarcely just to note, and cruel to blame, the maledictions which were on this occasion wrung from the hearts of some of the representatives of the south. Though expressions, thrown out under such excitement, ought not to be recorded as the evidence of any man’s deliberate opinion, they are yet, in cooler moments, to be regretted. Nay, we are sure they have been.

“Much more to be deprecated are the

opinions which found their way into some of our public prints, in which the dissolution of the union was openly recommended, without the excuse of the excitement which existed in Congress, as a consequence of the imposition of the restriction on Missouri. We know the people of the south too well to suppose they would for a moment entertain the idea. The dissolution of the union! It is a sound almost to disturb the dead in their repose. We hope never to hear it again. The constitution can only be amended, changed, or annulled, by the authority which framed it. To admit any other mode of dissolving the union, is a dangerous political heresy. What others may think on this subject, we know not; but, for ourselves, entertaining the opinions which it is well known we do on the Missouri subject, we should yet feel wretched if we supposed that the exclusion of Missouri for ever from the union could endanger the fabric of our constitution. The storm might rock its battlements, but could not rive its foundation. We trust it is too deeply laid in the principles and affections of the people, and too powerfully fortified by their attachment, to be in danger of prostration from any general cause but dilapidation by time, or from any event short of a convulsion of the moral world."

Holding no faith in the right of instruction, we should yet be glad, with a view to increase the strength of the moderate party, if the state of Pennsylvania had an opportunity of again declaring her opinion, joined (as from some indications in the debate on the fire at Savannah, we think it would be,) with an affectionate expression of her attachment to the southern states.

Time is the greatest moderator, and the right will be sure of success if its advocates do not, by the extremes of timidity or rashness, overthrow their own hopes. What is now wanting, is not strength of intellect so much as kindness of heart.

FOR THE NATIONAL RECORDER.

Mr. Peale's Grand Picture of "The Court of Death."

Upon a canvas of the unusual length of twenty-four feet, (shrouded with ample hangings, and illuminated by unseen windows) beneath a sable canopy, a youthful corpse, of the finest proportions, extended at its feet, is dimly discovered a majestic figure clad in flowing drapery, the right hand extended, as if silently superintend-

ing the irresistible progress of time and decay upon the life of man. On the right hand of this mysterious being, an enticing figure of Pleasure is gracefully attending to silver vases: one filled with wine, with which she is tempting to repeated draughts a fine youth, whose shapely limbs betray marks of incipient debility; the other smoking with the incense gratuitously offered at the shrine of disease and death. Behind them is perceived Remorse, hiding its guilty head with uplifted hands; and Despair plunging a dagger into its breast. Further on are beheld, in different attitudes of agony or distress, the self devoted victims of intemperance and disease, which are so feelingly described by Milton, in *Paradise Lost*:

————— all maladies
Of ghastly spasm, or racking torture, qualms
Of heart-sick agony, all feverous kind,
Convulsions, epilepsies, fierce catarrhs,
Demoniac phrensy, moping melancholy,
Dropsies, and asthmas, and joint-racking rheums.

Enough, perhaps too much, of this agonizing perspective of human misery, which brought tears into the eyes of our first father, till the pitying angel assured him that there was

————— another way, besides
These painful passages, how we may come
To death, and mix with our co-natural dust:
The rule of, not too much, by temperance taught,
So might we live till like ripe fruit we dropt
Into our mother's lap, or were with ease
Gather'd (not harshly pluck'd,) for death mature.

The soothing idea of the poet is here beautifully personified by the painter. Upon the left hand of the figure of Death—not represented as the skeleton of the graveyard, or even the king of terrors; but as an inflexible judge, presiding with discernment and deliberation over the final result of human frailty—stands a venerable figure of Old Age, led to the very brink of Lethe by an amiable figure of Virtue, looking upon the countenance of Death, not with fear and aversion, but with mingled resignation and hope. From these pleasing figures to the extent of the canvas, the whole side of the picture is taken up with a metaphorical representation of the inhuman waste of life occasioned by the ravages and consequent miseries of war. In this the artist has wisely avoided the absurdities of Heathen mythology, under cover of which the naked figure of Mercury was, without scruple, placed by Rubens alongside of a cardinal in long robes and in a broad brimmed beaver, in the presence

chamber of a modern queen; and half the gods and goddesses of the court of Jupiter have been summoned to attend, on clouds, the inauguration or the apotheosis of a Christian prince. There are, however, in this episode, defects of a less ostensible description, which are willingly consigned by the writer of these brief remarks, to the researches of the curious; since the beauties of this sublime composition are amply sufficient to redeem its blemishes, and they will no doubt, sooner or later, give it a place among the most faultless and elaborate productions of the pencil.

Agriculture.

FROM THE AMERICAN FARMER.

SAINT FOIN.

Belmont, July 15th, 1820.

Sir—On the receipt of your letter, with the stalk of the annual, or *Italian clover*, I immediately put it into the hands of our professor of botany; under a hope that he could, and would furnish a more correct account of it, than I am capable of doing. But he has not favoured me with any reply to my request. I see in your several papers, every thing our knowledge of the subject admits; and therefore any addition in my power would be superfluous. But lest it should seem that I overlooked and neglected your very laudable endeavour to gain the information required for public benefit, I have deemed it right to apologize for the apparent inattention on my part. I think too well of your editorial merit; and of your paper, as a vehicle of agricultural intelligence, voluntarily to neglect any contribution I could afford to its usefulness. And yet the zeal for the subject of agriculture, and for the real independence, plenty, and comfort it produces, is so universally spread throughout our country; that an old labourer in the vineyard may be excused from further service; when so many cultivators, vigorous and intelligent, have come forward, with highly meritorious evidences of the most valuable kind of public spirit.

The *Hedysarum onobrychis*—*Sain foin*, or *Lupinella*, (entirely different from the Italian clover,) I know well. Mr. Crawford was pleased to send some of the seed to our Philadelphia Agricultural Society; and no doubt of the same parcel noticed in your paper. I wish I could give any agreeable or instructive account of this plant, encouraging to its adoption in our country.—Where it will thrive, no provender can exceed it, in plenty and durability. I have,

however, never been fortunate in its cultivation; although I have, in several periods of my life, tried it in every way, and in every kind of soil (common in our country) recommended in books, or gleaned from conversations with Europeans who came from the countries in which it abounds. When young it is the tenderest of plants. Weeds, grasses, droughts, and other annoyances, often overcome and destroy it. In its own countries, it is almost invulnerable, after it arrives at a proper age, when it exterminates other plants interfering with it. I have had no success in drilling; or sowing in broadcast and weeding by hand, or with hoes. Our winters are frequently fatal to it, when young and tender; and I have had it destroyed by frosts at three and four years old. It is a beautiful flower in the *parterre*; and I have continued it in my garden, wherein it was called *cockshew*, for many years. But I was often obliged to renew it from the seed. In Europe it will continue twenty years, and *that* in cold countries. I have, in my experiments from time to time, used many bushels of seed, both imported and of my own sowing.

I was much mortified under my failures; supposing I had not skilfully managed it. But the late *Gouverneur Morris* told me it had been tried unsuccessfully by himself and others, in New York and in some other part of our country which I forget. *My* failures ought not to discourage further trials. I deemed myself, however, bound to mention them, to warn against cultivating this plant, at first, on an extensive scale. It may succeed in better hands, and in some parts of our country more genial to its growth and culture. But it would be prudent to begin with small experiments, and extend the cultivation as it may be found successful. By cleaning and preparing the ground well, previously to sowing it, much subsequent labour and expense would be saved.

After all, it would appear that the *sain foin* is but a substitute for less troublesome and better grasses; in lands wherein none others will profitably grow. Clay and wet soils are hostile to it, and rich grounds choke it in its infancy with weeds and natural grasses. Soiling it green, is preferred to saving it for hay, although both are practised, and it is difficult to cure, or keep. It is strong food, most proper for working horses; and cattle are most fond of it cut green; but care must be taken to prevent their eating it too ravenously, and becoming *hoven*. The hay is nutritive, but coarse and puffy: and *that* in proportion to the burden

of the crop, which is often two, and sometimes three tons to the acre.

Pasturing, the first year of its growth, is injurious, and not desirable at any time, although it is practised. We have superior grasses for grazing in all stages of growth of the sain foin, yet it affords great abundance of forage where no other can be so plenteously obtained.

The culture is well worth attempting in mountainous, and second or third rate and light lands, wherein the root can penetrate deeply, for its roots extend to almost incredible depths, and the longer and larger the root, the more the plant will thrive.

In *Switzerland* and other such countries, sain foin is a main dependence, because in many parts of those countries the finer grasses will not grow profitably. In *England* it is cultivated in their thin soils for the same reason. *Sinclair* notes it as indigenous in Britain.

The seed is very subject to being faulty, because the plant is often cut before maturity, the hay being more valuable on this account. From one bushel to five, accordingly as the seed is ripe, light, or heavy, are required for sowing an acre. Some recommend spring sowing, others seed in the autumn. It must be lightly covered. The seed is difficult to preserve, being apt to heat, and thus become worthless. Some sow it with grain; others disapprove of this mode. Sometimes, clover is sown with it; and the clover, like a bad nurse, will often overlay and smother its protégé.

Drilling and horse hoeing are most generally practised to insure cleanliness; and frequent stirring the soil is essential—so that much labour is required in its cultivation; and its being sown in meagre soils, such labour in the first stages of its growth, is indispensable. Yet, in some parts of Europe, large fields of it sown with grain are to be seen in great plenty, without such expensive and laborious attention. I have not succeeded in this way. *Dung* produces its foes—weeds and grasses—marl, ashes, and such auxiliaries are, in preference applied. I have failed by sowing imported seed, which is often like most others heated in the ship, or negligently collected, and ill prepared for transportation. It flowers in June, and ripens its seed in July, in this country. In Europe, much later.

Having repeatedly tried the culture of this plant, in drill and broadcast, I found it to interfere so much with my other engagements, that I abandoned its cultivation. Where labour is cheap, and at command,

it would make, however, an agreeable variety to cultivate a small spot with sain foin, both for instruction and amusement. I do not hold my experience as exemplary, or in any wise as a test. But I have candidly given, so far as I know, or have learned from books or conversation, the debtor and creditor in relation to it.

France is accounted the country most favourable to sain foin, which in Europe is commonly called *French grass*. It is as often styled sain foin—*wholesome*, as *saint foin*, holy hay. *Lupinella* is to me, a new appellation. It is not of the same botanical class with the *Lupin*; though its flowers and leaves bear some distant resemblance to some of that tribe. Botanists must decide on the propriety of this nomenclature. Some seed of the *Lucerne* has been sent hither from *Italy*, under the name "*Lupinella*."

In the appendix to *sir H. Davy's Agricultural Chemistry*, it appears by *Sinclair's "Experiments on Grasses,"* that in grounds in which clovers grow thriftily, the *Hedysarum onobrychis*, or *Sain foin*, grown on the same kind of soils, is inferior to the clovers of the best species, both in grass, hay, and nutritive matter. But *Sinclair* conjectures, that on dry, hilly situations or chalky soils, "it would be superior in every respect." The corollary to be drawn from this, is that the soils last mentioned, are good for sain foin, and improper for clovers. The *Trifolium macrorhizum*, is astonishingly productive. It may be the same with, or equal to that whereof you sent to me the specimen. It is a native of *Hungary*, and an annual plant; but more fit for use as green forage, than for hay. It sheds abundance of seed, from which constant successions arise; so that is *quasi*, perennial. See pages xlv. xlv. of the appendix.* With my best regards, I am your obedient servant,

RICHARD PETERS.

J. S. SKINNER, Esq.

FROM THE AMERICAN FARMER.

GEOGRAPHY OF BOTANY,

Or the Effect of Climate upon Corn and other Productions of the Earth.

Essex, June 2d, 1820.

Dear Sir—I received your present of the Golden Sioux Corn a few days ago, for

* *Sinclair's* experiment was made on sain foin producing far under two tons to the acre. It lost almost two-thirds in drying; and the nutritive matter in 3539 pounds of hay, was only 314

which be pleased to accept my thanks: it shall certainly have a fair trial. As this is the first leisure which I have had since, I could not sooner reply to your inquiries—"whether plants do not change character by transplantation, and accommodate themselves to climate? and whether this corn, for example, will not take advantage of the long summers of the south, and give itself more time accordingly, for coming to perfection." Investigations of this kind belong to what has been called "Botanical Geography"—a branch of science, comparatively speaking, of very recent origin; and one to which, I believe, no person in our country has yet devoted sufficient attention to have collected facts enough for forming any thing like a rational theory. At least I can answer positively in regard to myself, by saying that I have no knowledge, derived from my own experience, which would enable me to give you any satisfactory information. The little, however, which I know of the opinions and researches of others in this interesting study, I will communicate with pleasure, as it may be the means of eliciting from those who are much better informed, some details which may lead to useful practical results. M. de Humboldt, and Monsieur de Caudelle, appear to be the individuals who have most distinguished themselves in this science; and indeed they seem to have done all that diligent research, accuracy of observation, and great sagacity of intellect, aided by much learning, could accomplish within the period which they have devoted to these inquiries. The latter, according to his own account, spent six entire years in prosecuting, through the different departments of France, such investigations as were calculated to determine, with all attainable precision, the general laws by which the geography of plants is regulated. The 8th number of the 'Journal of Science and the Arts,' contains a very interesting and instructive article, extracted from the works of this writer, which appears to me to detail many facts, observations, and reasonings applicable to the subject of your inquiries. The whole, taken together, seem to prove, very conclusively, that, although temperature arising either from climate or elevation, light, moisture, and aspect, exercise each a considerable influence over the

pounds. All the clovers are equal to it; and the *T. macrorrhizum* exceeds it in weight of nutritive matter, as 5 to 67. In pages xlii. xliii. iv. v. and vi. the comparative weights of nutritive matter, between the sain foin and other grasses may be seen.

growth of vegetables—the distribution of heat in the different seasons of the year has more power than any other cause whatever; and, consequently, that where plants have most heat in a given time, supposing nearly equal moisture, they will mature soonest. The northern summers being much shorter than southern ones, and a certain quantity of heat being essential to the ripening of all vegetable productions, this quantity must be given, either by each day in the north being actually hotter, than each corresponding day in the south; or by the heat of the northern summer day being exerted, as is the fact, for a longer portion of the twenty-four hours, than the heat of the southern summer day. In either of these cases the quantum of heat required for the maturity of plants within the limited time, would be received, and they would of course ripen sooner after their growth commenced, in high latitudes than in low.

I know not how the article alluded to might suit the tastes of others, but I certainly have seen nothing of the kind, the perusal of which has gratified me more; nor do I believe you could well give any thing of the same nature in the *American Farmer*, which would generally prove more acceptable to that class of your readers who are anxious to extend the science of agriculture so far as to embrace every thing connected with it. I am, dear sir, your sincere well wisher, JAMES M. GARNETT.

Record.

Presentment of the Grand Jury.

The grand jury of the commonwealth of Pennsylvania, inquiring for the city of Philadelphia, for the mayor's court of the said city, having finished the business laid before them by the officer prosecuting in behalf of the commonwealth, have taken into their serious and deliberate consideration, other matters, in which they conceive themselves, in common with their fellow citizens, deeply concerned. Before they ask to be discharged, they beg leave to state some of the most important of them to the court, trusting it will not be considered as trespassing beyond the limit of their duty, and that their representation will receive the candid attention of the court, and of the public at large.

The late calamity with which our city has been visited, although comparatively not so severe as hitherto, suggests the necessity of adopting and executing every possible measure to prevent its recurrence. For this purpose, the grand jury believe still greater vigilance is demanded from the proper authorities, to which the guardianship of the health of the city is confided. They mean not to convey any censure for the past, still less to meddle with the long disputed question, whether the yellow fever (so called,) is of foreign

or of domestic origin. But while it remains unsettled, (and the faculty seem to be as far from resolving it as at any former period,) it is the opinion of the grand jury, that it is a duty dictated by self preservation, to guard with vigilance every avenue to its approach. The grand jury would accordingly beg leave to recommend that the quarantine laws should be strictly and rigidly enforced. And on the other hand, assuming it to be an uncontroverted fact, that cleanliness is healthful, and filthiness always a source of disease, they would recommend also to the Board of Health and the city police, increased care and exertion to prevent or remove whatever is calculated to generate or propagate disease. A yet stricter attention to the streets, lanes and alleys of our city, particularly such as are in the neighbourhood of the wharves, and the immediate removal of every thing from them, whether animal or vegetable, which is liable to putrefaction, seems to be indispensable to the health of the city. The condition of many of our wharves also calls for attention. The grand jury conceive it would be greatly improved if they were paved and carried out into deep water, so as to prevent the exposure of mud and filth at the bottom when the tide is out. The paving of the wharves would contribute no less to the comfort and convenience of the citizens than to the general health, and it is a matter of some surprise to the grand jury, that the example of paving them has not long since been followed by their proprietors. The condition of Water street generally, especially of the houses on the west side of it, affords just cause of apprehension. Imperfectly ventilated, and feeling scarcely any of the purifying influence of the sun, many of them are crowded by inhabitants to a degree, which in a purer atmosphere, and with far greater personal cleanliness, would be consistent with neither their comfort nor health. If disease be not generated among them, certain it is, that when introduced, it finds abundant means to nourish and propagate it. The grand jury are impressed with a conviction that experience has manifested the wisdom and prudence of William Penn, the great founder of Pennsylvania, who, by his plan of this city, intended that no dwellings should be suffered eastward of Front street, and they believe that even now, true economy would be consulted by restoring that part of the city to his original design. It is a work worthy of the enterprise of the citizens of this great and growing metropolis, and although it may be postponed, it will probably be at some time accomplished. There can be little doubt, whether, admitting it to be highly expedient, the present generation should engage in it, or leave it to posterity with increased expense and diminished ability, after the prosperity of our city shall have been retarded, and the accumulation of calamity shall demand it as a work of necessity, not leave it as one of choice. In the meanwhile, as an imperfect measure of caution, the grand jury conceive that the portion of the city before alluded to, should receive the most scrupulous and rigid attention.

In connexion with what has been before stated in relation to health, the grand jury feel themselves bound to bring to the view of the court, the pest house, which has been opened near to the Alms House, and likewise the old brick

ponds in the western part of the city. That the former establishment, so unnecessarily placed in a populous neighbourhood, a pregnant source of alarm, if not of danger, should have been tolerated, can perhaps only be accounted for by the general ignorance of its existence. The pools of stagnant water collected in the latter, are nuisances which can and ought to be immediately removed.

The grand jury have observed with deep regret, the great and increasing evils arising from the almost innumerable tippling houses, *licensed* and *unlicensed*, which are distributed through every quarter of the city. The latter are often found under the mask of grocery stores, and oyster cellars, and the former are only distinguished from these, by their being the *open* and *legalized* resorts of drunkards and vagabonds. Both alike, are overflowing fountains of misery and vice of every description. It is but too notorious, that in very many instances in which licenses have been obtained, instead of being used for public convenience, and lawful purposes, they are abused and made covers for the retail of spirituous liquors to the labouring poor, and to domestic servants. To such houses they are tempted to resort, until the habit of intemperance becomes inveterate—they are corrupted by evil communications, and disease, extreme poverty, and crime, quickly and surely follow. This evil has been often seen and commented upon, and the grand jury, while they would recommend increased vigilance in suppressing the sale of spirituous liquors, by less measure than a quart *without license*, respectfully submit to the court, whether public morality and happiness, might not be greatly promoted, if licenses were granted with more caution and less frequency than heretofore?

The grand jury also represent as a great grievance, the many trifling vexations, and groundless prosecutions which are sustained and brought forward in the shape of bills of indictment, occasioning great expense to the public, loss and inconvenience to the parties, and producing a spirit of discord and litigation, adverse to the precepts of religion, and the dictates of sound morality. They entertain the opinion, possibly ill founded, that it would not be a violation of official duty, if in all these cases in which public justice and the community have no more concern than in civil suits, the magistrate were to assume the character of peace maker, and endeavour to reconcile wrangling neighbours to each other, instead of whetting their resentment, by furnishing means to prolong their quarrels.

The grand jury also represent as nuisances, the pawnbroker's offices, shops for the sale of old clothes, and petty auction stores, which now lamentably abound. They subject the poor and distressed to usurious extortions, they tempt to the commission of fraud and crime, and they defraud the state of its revenue. The facility which they afford for converting stolen goods, (of which they are notoriously the receptacles) into money, greatly encourages the commission of larcenies, especially by domestics. Without their aid, the sale of stolen goods could with difficulty be attempted, without detection, and the temptation to crime would not only be greatly diminished, but the chance of regaining his property would be greater for the plundered individual.

The penitentiary is a subject of great interest and concern, and although the grand jury do not conceive it necessary to dwell on it, they cannot refrain from bringing it to the view of the court. The theory of our system of punishment for crime, has excited the admiration, and been imitated by not only most of our sister states, but in a degree by some foreign countries. Pennsylvania has reason to be proud of it; yet it is a lamentable truth, that owing to the insufficiency of accommodation in the present building and yard, it is in practice greatly disappointed, if not defeated. The reformation of the offender is its charitable purpose, but how can reformation be expected in the midst of criminals, of all ages and grades of vice? The insecurity too of the present building, for the purpose of confinement, and the danger to their own, and the public health, in consequence of the prisoners being unavoidably crowded, need only be adverted to. Their importance to the safety of the community, must be obvious, and the grand jury have thus generally remarked upon this particular subject, because they are encouraged to believe that their views are by no means peculiar to themselves, but entertained by those who are authorized to remedy existing evils.

Other subjects of minor importance, although in themselves worthy of attention, have been under the consideration of the grand jury, but they refrain from trespassing longer on the time of the court. They suppose that prevention or remedy, for most of the evils here represented, are already within the municipal powers and authority, and if there be any not so, the grand jury cannot doubt that upon a suitable representation to the legislature, they will be so enlarged and extended as to be commensurate to every exigency. All which is respectfully submitted.

By order of the grand jury,

JOHN M'CAULEY, Foreman.

I. WAMPOLE, Sec'y.

Philadelphia, Oct. 26, 1820.

A meeting of the natives of Great Britain and Ireland is called in the papers, to take into consideration the propriety of presenting an address of condolence to the queen of England!

Miscellany.

From the New Monthly Magazine.

THE VISION OF LAS-CASAS.

Las-Casas, the eloquent, the indefatigable defender of the Americans, lay stretched on his death-bed in his ninetieth year. For a long period preceding his demise, all his thoughts were directed toward the happiness of a better world; and though now about to enter that world, he trembled on the brink of eternity. Conscious of the purity of his heart and the innocence of his life, he had encountered, without dismay, the angry glance of kings, and he dreaded no earthly judge; but the judge before whom he was speedily to be summoned, was God,

and he was awed by the supreme sanctity of infinite justice. Thus the strongest as well as the weakest eye is overpowered by the dazzling beams of the sun.

At the foot of his couch was seated an aged monk, who had long been his faithful friend. Equal in virtue to Las-Casas, he loved him as a brother; inferior to him in courage and talent, he respected him even to admiration. He was continually near his death-bed; and observed with sorrow the decay of nature, though he still endeavoured to rouse the hopes of his dying friend; but the great thought of eternity filled the soul of Las-Casas: he begged the old man to retire, and leave him in the presence of his judge.

Las-Casas collected himself: he recalled the past to his memory, and cast a retrospective glance over his whole life; but to whatever point he fixed his attention, he discovered errors and faults; he saw them in their full magnitude, and their consequences lay extended before him like a vast ocean. His good actions, on the contrary, seemed poor, covered with blemishes, and void of the fruits which he had expected they would produce; like a feeble streamlet which loses itself amidst the sands of the desert, and whose banks are adorned neither with flowers nor verdure. At this aspect, overwhelmed with shame and repentance, in his imagination he knelt down before God, and fervently exclaimed: "Oh, Almighty Father of mankind, do not condemn me; let me find grace in thy presence!"

This emotion overpowered his strength, and he sunk into a profound sleep. Suddenly he thought that the stars of heaven lay scattered beneath his feet, and that he ascended, supported on clouds, through boundless space. At an immense distance he beheld rays of dazzling light issuing from majestic obscurity; and on every side innumerable legions of beings rose from, and descended to inferior worlds. Scarcely had his eye gazed and his soul admired, when an angel, with the severe brow of a judge, appeared before him, and opened a book which he held in his hand. A shuddering like that of death—like that which seizes the criminal at sight of the scaffold, chilled the heart of the old man when the immortal being pronounced his name, and enumerated all the noble faculties with which Heaven had endowed his mind—all the mild and generous affections, the seeds of which had been diffused through his blood—and named the opportunities for the exercise of virtue, the aids and encour-

ragements which his situation afforded him. At this moment, all that was good in him seemed to belong to God, and only his errors and sins appeared to belong properly to himself.

The angel commenced the history of his life; he turned in search of the inconsiderate aberrations of his youth; but they were nowhere to be found: the first tear of repentance had obliterated them. The tear alone was visible in their stead; and every serious resolution to do well—every joyful emotion on the fulfilment of a duty—every sentiment of virtue and humility, and every triumph over terrestrial nature, which is ever revolting against Heaven, was carefully noted down. Hope then began to kindle in the heart of Las-Casas: for, though his errors were more numerous than grains of sand on the sea shore, yet his life abounded in acts of goodness; and these acts became the more frequent, and his faults the more rare, in proportion as his years increased—in proportion as experience and reflection developed the energy of his mind, and the habit of fulfilling his duty strengthened his desire and his power of fulfilling it. Yet his most noble actions were not perfect in the eye of God, and the source of all his virtue was still troubled and tarnished.

At length the angel raised his voice, and his words flowed eloquently:—the youth had attained the age of maturity, and the new world, formerly peaceful and happy, was a prey to carnage and despair, when Las-Casas appeared like the hero of humanity. The angel described what he suffered and what he achieved; how all the sorrows of innocence became his own, and fired his soul with that ardent zeal which even old age could not extinguish; how, supported by the justice of his cause, he braved the vengeance of power, and pronounced a loud anathema on the fanatics who smiled on murder, and the policy which neglected to punish them. The angel enumerated the instances in which he had risked his life on the waves of the sea, regardless of storms and shipwreck, to lay the complaints of the innocent at the foot of the throne, or to convey hope and consolation back to the afflicted. He mentioned how Las-Casas had appeared before the proud conqueror, the first who had ever ruled over two worlds, when, on hearing the voice which reproached him for his crimes, the monarch imagined himself in the presence of the Judge of the universe, and that his death-bed was enveloped in

avenging flames. The angel painted the sorrow of the virtuous man, when he wept over his blighted hopes—his courage, when he re-assembled his forces, and dashed into new enterprises—and how, when his hopes were finally extinguished, he buried himself in retirement, renouncing all pleasure and consolation, regarding his terrestrial abode as a dungeon, and devoting his whole soul to the thoughts of eternity. As the angel perused the book, his eyes became animated, his countenance grew more and more radiant, and beams of pure and gentle light expanded around him—for zeal in the cause of truth and justice, though reduced to silence, and testified only by tears, is of inestimable value in the eye of Heaven.

The old man listened with downcast eyes; and melancholy thoughts were expressed in his countenance. A sad recollection oppressed his heart, namely, the fatal counsel which he had once given, in a phrensy of despair, to relieve one people by the oppression of another.* His thoughts wandered on the banks of the Senegal and the Gambia, and to the interior of that quarter of the world, where eternal warfare resigned millions of men to the chains of European barbarians. The angel, at length, pronounced that fatal action, more dreadful in its consequences than a crime of darkness, more fertile in murder and tears than the old man could have imagined in his most disturbed dreams. That immensity of horror, beyond the power of language to express or fancy to picture, spread over continent, sea, and islands; the crimes of barbarity, the tortures of innocence, the stifled shrieks of agony, the silence of despair, all were present, all were reckoned up before God. Las-Casas stood motionless and almost petrified with horror. At this awful moment his thoughts were no longer occupied with the presence of the supremely holy and just Being, from whose eye no darkness can shelter, and no wings protect: his heart, moved by compassion, felt only the misery of so many millions of his fellow creatures. The angel

* Though the introduction of this incident appears to be the object for which the *Vision* is principally written, yet it is very doubtful whether Las-Casas did really recommend the cultivation of the American colonies by African negroes. The fact has been strongly contested by many writers, and the *Abbé Gregoire*, in a memoir which he presented to the Institute, seems to have proved, beyond contradiction, that this ancient tradition respecting the origin of the slave trade, is not founded on truth.

beheld him tormented by the serpents of remorse, and shed a tear of pity.

A voice then issued from the sanctuary—a mild and gentle voice like that of a forgiving father, and the angel heard the words: "*Tear the book.*"

He obeyed; and the wrecks of the book were annihilated. "Thy foibles," said he, "are effaced from the recollection of God; but thy name is inscribed before him in characters of light: Were he to punish faults such as thine, no mortal could be justified, and heaven, void of inmates, would be a mere desert. God doomed immortal souls to wander amidst dust, that through errors they might come to the knowledge of truth, acquire virtue from faults, and happiness from suffering."

"Oh, take from me!" exclaimed Las-Casas, shedding a torrent of tears, "in pity take me from the recollection of my fault, or I shall eternally bear my punishment within my own bosom. Destroy this terrible recollection, as thou hast destroyed the book wherein it was inscribed, or in heaven I shall vainly seek the presence of the Almighty; in the bosom of happiness, I shall vainly sigh for repose."

"Mortal," replied the angel, "does not happiness exist within thyself? And where canst thou find it, imperfect creature—thou who art not, like God, exempt from faults and errors! where canst thou find happiness, if not in the proof which thou hast given of having employed all thy faculties to do good—in the sincere and profound love which animates thy heart for the meanest of thy fellow creatures—and in thy nobleness of mind which is evinced by thy very repentance?"—"But this inexpressible affliction, prolonged through the lapse of ages,"—"It will be converted into happiness and plenitude of joy, in fulfilment of the plan of HIM who created thee. Thou hast acknowledged thy weakness; now acknowledge HIM in his grandeur."

He motioned to the clouds, which opened with the roaring of thunder, and the angel descended with Las-Casas to created worlds. The immortal being showed him the earth, which rolled beneath his feet; he pointed to the steep mountains covered with eternal snow; and marked out the devastation occasioned by earthquakes and tempests. Brooks and rivulets flowed down from the hills, and millions of beings were happy on their banks; the blessing of heaven descended in thunder upon the earth, and the woods and plains were clothed with fresher verdure. In those places which had suffered from the ravages of the storm, man

breathed more freely, and his countenance bore the ruddy hue of health: for contagious disease no longer floated amidst the atmospheric vapours; the tempest had broken its wings, and it had vanished.

Then the angel having developed to the eyes of Las-Casas the scourges which afflict the earth, and the blessings which are diffused along with them, he conducted him from visible to invisible nature, and initiated him in the sublime truths which no mortal hand can unfold to mortal eye. He taught him that, amidst the revolutions and agitations of mortals, the Almighty pursues his course with an equal pace, surrounded by glory, and that no vice, no error, is permanent in the vast space of the creation, from the first to the last of the stars. "Suffering," said he, "awakens the activity of the soul—in the bosom of misfortune arise the noblest sentiments that honour humanity. Torn from his country, on a foreign soil, the witness of his labour and his sorrows, the slave gathers up a treasure for eternity. His mind receives impressions containing the embryo seeds of knowledge dear to the inhabitants of heaven; in his oppressed and sorrowing mind, a thousand virtues will one day spring up, and amongst them, that which crowns all—the gentlest—the most sublime—the fulfilment of the law—the perfection of humanity—namely, *that holy love* which extends to all beings, and embraces even one's enemy. And that enemy, covered with the wounds which vice has inflicted on his moral nature, will one day rise from his degradation; his punishment is but the delay of happiness: he travels by a steep, thorny, and winding road, which recedes from heaven, and nevertheless leads to it. In the order established by Supreme Wisdom, perversity engenders misery; misery gives birth to repentance; the fruit of repentance is virtue; that of virtue is happiness; and in the bosom of happiness arises a virtue increasing in purity and sublimity. Every earthly discord is changed into divine harmony, and every complaint into a hymn of joy."

Seized with the holy tremor announcing the presence of God, Las-Casas attentively listened to the angel, and became acquainted with the mysteries of divine love. At this moment a veil seemed to fall from his eyes. The darkness of ignorance, with all its horrible phantoms, suddenly vanished; the day seemed to break to him on the eternal world, and to disclose to him all its secrets; the light arose, pure, serene, and brilliant, and an ecstasy of joy an-

nounced its approach. Still, however, every fibre of the old man trembled with grief and compassion; his joy was mingled with sorrow, and tears flowed from his eyes. "Oh, Thou!" he exclaimed, falling on his knees, and raising his eyes and hands toward the Sanctuary—"Oh, Thou whom I sought in my childhood, and who now revealest thyself to me, such as thou art, all grace, all mercy, all love!—my Father, and not my Judge; the Father of all thy creatures—the Father of these numberless worlds, the work of thy hands! Thou who hast raised a rich harvest of salvation, even where my ignorance had planted the seeds of ruin; who makest me feel in my inmost soul, that to belong to thee is happiness, and to see thy greatness is the summit of bliss; Thou who rewardest me with ecstasies of joy for the mere will to do good—Alas! for the mere will, with powerless efforts to effect it!—Thou who hast ordained that even errors should be transformed into new and fertile sources of bliss;—Supreme, incomparable Being! But I can no longer regard thee; my soul sinks!"—His tongue now became mute. The angel extended his hand toward him, and with a look beaming with divine love, pressed him to his bosom, and said, "My brother! . . ."

Here Las-Casas awoke. On raising his eyes, he beheld his terrestrial angel, his faithful guardian, who had approached his bedside to listen whether he still breathed. He attempted to speak; he wished to describe the happiness he had experienced; but his eyelids closed, his head sunk on his pillow, and his limbs were already stiffened by the icy hand of Death. The pious monk, in an agony of grief, kissed his cold forehead, and bathed it with tears. Then clasping his hands, and raising his eyes to heaven, he prayed that his own death might resemble that of his venerable friend—for Las-Casas had gently yielded up his breath like a child on its mother's bosom; and the peace of heaven still smiled on his countenance amid the shades of death.

From the New Monthly Magazine.

On the Living Novelists.

MATURIN.

The author of *Montorio* and of *Bertram* is unquestionably a person gifted with no ordinary powers. He has a quick sensibility—a penetrating and intuitive acuteness—and an unrivalled vigour and felicity of language, which enable him at one time to

attain the happiest condensation of thought, and at others to pour forth a stream of eloquence, rich, flowing, and deep, chequered with images of delicate loveliness, or darkened by broad shadows cast from objects of stern and adamantine majesty. Yet, in common with many other potent spirits of the present time, he fails to excite within us any pure and lasting sympathy. We do not, on reading his works, feel that we have entered on a precious and imperishable treasure. They dazzle, they delight, they surprise, and they weary us—we lay them down with a vague admiration for the author, and try to shake off their influence as we do the impressions of a feverish dream. It is not thus that we receive the productions of genuine and holy bards—of Shakspeare, of Milton, of Spenser, or of Wordsworth—whose far-reaching imaginations come home to our hearts, who become the companions of our sweetest moods, and with whom we long to "set up our everlasting rest." Their creations are often nearest to our hearts when they are furthest removed from the actual experience of our lives. We travel on the bright tracts which their genius reveals to us as safely and with as sure and fond a tread as along the broad highway of the world. When the regions which they set before us are the most distant from our ordinary perceptions, we yet seem at home in them, their wonders are strangely familiar to us, and the scene, overspread with a consecrating and lovely lustre, breaks on us, not as a wild fantastic novelty, but as a revived recollection of some holier life, which the soul rejoices thus delightfully to recognize.

Not thus do the works of Mr. Maturin—original and surprising as they often are—affect us. They have no fibres in them which entwine with the heartstrings, and which keep their hold until the golden chords of our sensibility and imagination themselves are broken. They pass by us sometimes like gorgeous phantoms, sometimes like "horrible shadows and unreal mockeries," which seem to elude us because they are not of us. When we follow him closest, he introduces us into a region where all is unsatisfactory and unreal—the chaos of principles, fancies, and passions—where mightiest elements are yet floating without order, where appearances between substance and shadow perpetually harass us, where visionary forms beckon us through painful avenues, and on approach sink into despicable realities, and pillars which looked ponderous and immoveable at a distance, melt at the touch into air, and are

found to be only masses of vapour and of cloud. He neither raises us to the skies, nor "brings his angels down," but astonishes by a phantasmagoria of strange appearances, sometimes scarcely distinguishable in member, joint, or limb, but which, when most clearly defined, come not near us, nor claim kindred by a warm and living touch. This chill remoteness from humanity is attended by a general want of harmony and proportion in the whole—by a wild excursive-ness of sensibility and thought—which add to its ungenial influence, and may be traced to the same causes.

If we were disposed to refer these defects to one general source, we should attribute them to the want of an imagination proportionate to sensibility and to mastery of language in the writer's mind, or to his comparative neglect of that most divine of human faculties. It is edifying to observe how completely the nature of this power is mistaken by many who profess to decide on matters of taste. They regard it as something wild and irregular, the reverse of truth, nature, and reason, which is divided from insanity only by "a thin partition," and which, uncontrolled by sterner powers, forms the essence of madness. They think it abounds in the speeches of Mr. Phillips, because they are so crowded with tawdry and superfluous epithets—in the discourses of Dr. Chalmers, because they deal so largely in infinite obscurities that there is no room for a single image—and in the poems of lord Byron, because his characters are so unlike all beings which have ever existed. Far otherwise thought Spenser, when he represented the laurel as the meed—not of poets insane—but "of poets SAGE." Pure imagination is, indeed, the deep eye of the profoundest wisdom. It is opposed to reason, not in its results, but in its process; it does not demonstrate truth only because it sees it. There are vast and eternal realities in our nature, which reason proves to exist—which sensibility "feels after and finds"—and which imagination beholds in clear and solemn vision, and pictures with a force and vividness which assures their existence even to ungifted mortals. Its subjects are the true, the universal, and the lasting. Its distinguishing property has no relation to dimness, or indistinctness, or dazzling radiance, or turbulent confusedness, but is the power of setting all things in the clearest light, and bringing them into perfect harmony. Like the telescope, it does not only magnify celestial objects, but brings them nearer to us. Of all the faculties it

is the severest and the most unerring. Reason may beguile with splendid sophistry; sensibility may fatally misguide; but if imagination exists at all, it must exhibit only the real. A mirror can no more reflect an object which is not before it, than the imagination can show the false and the baseless. By revealing to us its results in the language of imagery, it gives to them almost the evidence of the senses. If the analogy between an idea and its physical exponent is not complete, there is no effort of imagination—if it is, the truth is seen, and felt, and enjoyed, like the colours and forms of the material universe. And this effect is produced not only with the greatest possible certainty, but in the fewest possible words. Yet even when this is done—when the illustration is not only the most enchanting, but the most convincing, of proofs—the writer is too often contemptuously depreciated as *flowery*, by the advocates of mere reason. Strange chance! that he who has embodied truth in a living image, and thus rendered it visible to the intellectual perceptions, should be confounded with those who conceal all sense and meaning beneath mere *verbiage* and fragments of disjointed metaphor.

Thus the products of genuine imagination are "all compact." It is, indeed, only the compactness and harmony of its pictures which give to it its name or its value. To discover that there are mighty elements in humanity—to observe that there are bright hues and graceful forms in the external world—and to know the fitting names of these—is all which is required to furnish out a rich stock of spurious imagination to one who aspires to the claim of a wild and irregular genius. For him a dictionary is a sufficient guide to Parnassus. It is only by representing those intellectual elements in their finest harmony—by combining those hues and forms in the fairest pictures—or by making the glorious combinations of external things the symbols of truth and moral beauty—that imagination really puts forth its divine energies. We do not charge on Mr. Maturin that he is destitute of power to do this, or that he does not sometimes direct it to its purest uses. But his sensibility is so much more quick and subtle, than his authority over his impressions is complete; the flow of his words so much more copious and facile than the throng of images on his mind; that he too often confounds us with unnumbered snatches and imperfect gleams of beauty, or astonishes us by an outpouring of eloquent bombast, instead of enrich-

ing our souls with distinct and vivid conceptions. Like many other writers of the present time—especially of his own country—he does not wait until the stream which young enthusiasm sets loose shall work itself clear, and calmly reflect the highest heavens. His creations bear any stamp but that of truth and soberness. He sees the glories of the external world, and the mightier wonders of man's moral and intellectual nature, with a quick sense, and feels them with an exquisite sympathy—but he gazes on them in "very drunkenness of heart," and becomes giddy with his own indistinct emotions, till all things seem confounded in a gay bacchanalian dance, and assume strange fantastic combinations; which, when transferred to his works, startle for a moment, but do not produce that "sober certainty of waking bliss" which real imagination assures. There are two qualities necessary to form a truly imaginative writer—a quicker and an intenser feeling than ordinary men possess for the beautiful and the sublime, and the calm and meditative power of regulating, combining, and arranging its own impressions, and of distinctly bodying forth the final results of this harmonizing process. Where the first of these properties exists, the last is perhaps attainable by that deep and careful study which is more necessary to a poet than to any artist who works in mere earthly materials. But this study many of the most gifted of modern writers unhappily disdain; and if mere sale and popularity are their objects, they are right; for in the multitude the wild, the disjointed, the incoherent, and the paradoxical, which are but for a moment, necessarily awaken more immediate sensation than the pure and harmonious, which are destined to last while nature and the soul shall endure.

It is easy to perceive how it is that the imperfect creations of men of sensibility and of eloquence strike and dazzle more at the first, than the completest works of truly imaginative poets. A perfect statue—a temple fashioned with exactest art—appear less, at a mere glance, from the nicety of their proportions. The vast majority of readers, in an age like our's, have neither leisure nor taste to seek and ponder over the effusions of holiest genius. They must be awakened into admiration by something new, and strange, and surprising; and the more remote from their daily thoughts and habits—the more fantastical and daring—the effort, the more will it please, because the more will it rouse them. Thus a man who will exhibit some impos-

sible combination of heroism and meanness—of virtue and of vice—of heavenly love and infernal malignity and baseness—will receive their wonder and their praise. They call this POWER, which is in reality the most pitiable weakness. It is because a writer has not imagination enough to exhibit in new forms the universal qualities of nature and the soul, that he takes some strange and horrible anomaly as his theme. Incompetent to the divine task of rendering beauty "a simple product of the common day," he tries to excite emotion by disclosing the foulest recess of the foulest heart. As he strikes only one feeling, and that coarsely and ungently, he appears to wield a mightier weapon than he whose harmonious beauty sheds its influence equally over the whole of the sympathies. That which touches with strange commotion, and mere violence on the heart, but leaves no image there, seems to vulgar spirits more potent than the faculty which applies to it all perfect figures, and leaves them to sink gently into its fleshly tablets to remain there for ever. Yet surely that which merely shakes is not equal even in power to that which impresses. The wild disjointed part may be more amazing to a diseased perception than the well compacted whole; but it is the nice balancing of properties, the soft blending of shades, and the all-pervading and reconciling light shed over the harmonious imagination, which take off the sense of rude strength that alone is discernible in its naked elements. Is there more of heavenly power in seizing from among the tumult of chaos and eternal night, strange and fearful abortions, or in brooding over the vast abyss, and making it pregnant with life, and glory, and joy? Is it the higher exercise of human faculties to represent the frightful discordances of passion, or to show the grandeurs of humanity in that majestic repose which is at once an anticipation and a proof of its eternal destiny? Is transitory vice—the mere accident of the species—and those vices too which are the rarest and most appalling of all its accidents—or that good which is its essence, and which never can perish, fittest for the uses of the bard? Shall he desire to haunt the caves which lie lowest on the banks of Acheron, or the soft bowers watered by "Siloa's brook, that flows fast by the oracle of God?"

Mr. Maturin gave decisive indications of a morbid sensibility and a passionate eloquence outrunning his imaginative faculties, in the commencement of his literary career. His first romance, the "Family of

Montorio," is one of the wildest and strangest of all "false creations proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain." It is for the most part a tissue of magnificent yet unappalling horrors. Its great faults, as a work of amusement, are the long and unrelieved series of its gloomy and marvellous scenes, and the unsatisfactory explanation of them all, as arising from mere human agency. This last error he borrowed from Mrs. Ratcliffe, to whom he is far inferior in the economy of terrors, but whom he greatly transcends in the dark majesty of his style. As his events are far more wild and wondrous than her's, so his development is necessarily far more incredible and vexatious. There is, in this story, a being whom we are long led to believe is not of this world—who speaks in the tones of the sepulchre, glides through the thickest walls, haunts two distant brothers in their most secret retirements through their strange wanderings, leads one of his victims to a scene which he believes infernal, and there terrifies him with sights of the wildest magic—and who after all this, and after really vindicating to the fancy his claim to the supernatural by the fearful cast of his language—is discovered to be a low impostor, who has produced all by the aid of poor tricks and secret passages! Where is the policy of this? Unless by his power the author had given a credibility to magic through four-fifths of his work, it never could have excited any feeling but that of impatience or of scorn. And when we have surrendered ourselves willingly to his guidance—when we have agreed to believe impossibilities at his bidding—why does he reward our credence with derision, and tacitly reproach us for not having detected his idle mockeries? After all, too, the reason is no more satisfied than the fancy; for it would be a thousand times easier to believe in the possibility of spiritual influences, than in a long chain of mean contrivances, no one of which could ever succeed. The first is but one wonder, and that one to which our nature has a strange leaning; the last are numberless, and have nothing to reconcile them to our thoughts. In submitting to the former we contentedly lay aside our reasoning faculties; in approaching the latter our reason itself is appealed to at the moment when it is insulted. Great talent is, however, unquestionably exhibited in this singular story. A stern justice breathes solemnly through all the scenes in the devoted castle. "Fate sits on its dark battlements, and frowns." There is a spirit of deep

philosophy in the tracing of the gradual influence of patricidal thoughts on the hearts of the brothers, which would finely exhibit the danger of dallying with evil fancies, if the subject were not removed so far from all ordinary temptations. Some of the scenes of horror, if they were not accumulated until they wear out their impression, would produce an effect inferior to none in the works of Ratcliffe or of Lewis. The scene in which Filippo escapes from the assassins, deserves to be ranked with robber scenes in the Monk and Count Fathom. The diction of the whole is rich and energetic—not, indeed, flowing in a calm beauty which may glide on for ever—but impetuous as a mountain torrent, which, though it speedily passes away, leaves behind it no common spoils—

"Depositing upon the silent shore
Of memory, images and gentle thoughts
Which cannot die, and will not be destroyed."

"The Wild Irish Boy" is, on the whole, inferior to Montorio, though it served to give a farther glimpse into the vast extent of the author's resources. "The Milesian" is, perhaps, the most extraordinary of his romances. There is a bleak and misty grandeur about it, which, in spite of its glaring defects, sustains for it an abiding place in the soul. Yet never, perhaps, was there a more unequal production—alternately exhibiting the grossest plagiarism and the wildest originality—now swelling into offensive bombast, and anon disclosing the simplest majesty of nature, fluctuating with inconstant ebb between the sublime and the ridiculous, the delicate and the revolting. "Women, or Pour et Contre," is less unequal, but we think, on the whole, less interesting than the author's earlier productions. He should not venture, as in this work he has done, into the ordinary paths of existence. His persons, if not cast in a high and heroic mould, have no stamp of reality upon them. The reader of this work, though often dazzled and delighted, has a painful feeling that the characters are shadowy and unreal, like that which is experienced in dreams. They are unpleasant and tantalizing likenesses, approaching sufficiently near to the true to make us feel what they would be, and lament what they are. Eva, Zaira, the maniac mother, and the group of Calvinists, have all a resemblance to nature—and sometimes to nature at its most passionate or its sweetest—but they look as at a distance from us, as though between us and them there were some veil, or discolouring

medium, to baffle and perplex us. Still the novel is a splendid work; and gives the feeling that its author has "riches fineless" in store, which might delight as well as astonish the world, if he would cease to be their slave, and become their master.

In the narrow boundaries of the Drama the redundancies of Mr. Maturin have been necessarily corrected. In this walk, indeed, there seems reason to believe that his genius would have grown purer, as it assumed a severer attitude; and that he would have sought to attain high and true passion, and lofty imagination, had he not been seduced by the admiration unhappily lavished on lord Byron's writings. The feverish strength, the singular blending of good and evil, and the spirit of moral paradox, displayed in these works, were congenial with his tastes, and aroused in him the desire to imitate. "Bertram," his first and most successful tragedy, is a fine piece of writing, wrought out of a nauseous tale, and rendered popular, not by its poetical beauties, but by the violence with which it jars on the sensibilities, and awakens the sluggish heart from its lethargy. "Manuel," its successor, feebler, though in the same style, excited little attention, and less sympathy. In "Fredolpho," the author, as though he had resolved to sting the public into a sense of his power, crowded together characters of such matchless depravity, sentiments of such a demoniac cast, and events of such gratuitous horror, that the moral taste of the audience, injured as it had been by the success of similar works, felt the insult, and rose indignantly against it. Yet in this piece were passages of a soft and mournful beauty, breathing a tender air of romance, which led us bitterly to regret that the poet chose to "embower the spirit of a fiend, in mortal paradise of such sweet" song.

We do not, however, despair even yet of the regeneration of our author's taste. There has always been something of humanity to redeem those works in which his genius has been most perverted. There is no deliberate sneering at the disinterested and the pure—no cold derision of human hopes—no deadness to the lonely and the loving, in his writings. His error is that of a hasty trusting to feverish impulses, not of a malignant design. There is far more of the soul of goodness in his evil things, than in those of the noble bard whose example has assisted to mislead him. He does not, indeed, know so well how to place his unnatural characters in

imposing attitudes—to work up his morbid sensibilities for sale—or to "build the lofty rhyme" on shattered principles, and the melancholy fragments of hope. But his diction is more rich, his fancy is more fruitful, and his compass of thought and feeling more extensive. Happy shall we be to see him doing justice at last to his powers—studying not to excite the wonder of a few barren readers or spectators, but to live in the hearts of the good of future times—and, to this high end, leaving discord for harmony, the startling for the true, and the evil which, however potent, is but for a season, for the pure and the holy which endure for ever! T. D.

FREDERICK PURSH.

Being a Note to Professor Silliman's Tour
between Hartford and Quebec.

July 31, 1820.—The papers have just informed us of the death of the celebrated botanist, Frederick Pursh. He died at Montreal on the 11th inst. after a lingering illness.

When the *efforts and purposes* of a man who has, by useful or splendid labours, attracted the attention of the world, are cut off by death, and his *mortal toil is over*, the mind dwells with an increased interest on circumstances, which might not otherwise have attracted our attention. This is my apology for the following note.

At the town of Sorel, when we were returning to Montreal in the steam boat, Mr. Pursh came on board, and was with us the remainder of the passage. His scientific labours are well known, and the public have pronounced their decided approbation of his beautiful work, the *American Flora*, published in London in 1814. Mr. Pursh expressed himself very warmly, on the subject of the liberal aid which he received in Europe from scientific men, in the use of their libraries and their herbariums, and in the tender of their private advice and information; he mentioned, particularly, his obligations to sir Joseph Banks and president Smith. He informed me, that he contemplated another tour to Europe, for the purpose of publishing his *Flora of Canada*, upon which he had been already several years occupied, and expected to be still occupied for several years more. These researches led him much among the savage nations of the northwest and around the great lakes. He went first among them in company with the exploring and trading

parties of the Northwest Company, but fearing to be involved in the consequences of their quarrels, he abandoned their protection, and threw himself, alone and unprotected, upon the generosity of the aborigines. He pursued his toilsome researches month after month, travelling on foot, relying often on the Indians for support, and, of course, experiencing frequently the hunger, exposure, and perils of savage life. But such was the *enthusiasm* of his mind, and his complete devotion to the *ruling passion*, that he thought little of marching, day after day, often with a pack weighing sixty pounds on his shoulders, through forests and swamps, and over rocks and mountains, provided he could discover a *new plant*; great numbers of such he assured me he had found, and that he intended to publish the drawings and descriptions of them in his Canadian Flora. From the Indians, he said, he experienced nothing but kindness, and he often derived from them important assistance: he thought that had they been treated with uniform *justice and humanity* by the whites, they would have always returned the same treatment. He said he much preferred their protection to that of the wandering whites, who, unrestrained by almost any human law, prowl through those immense forests in quest of furs and game. Possibly (without, however, intending any thing disrespectful by the remark,) some mutual sympathies might have been excited, by the fact that Mr. Pursh was himself a *Tartar*, born and educated in Siberia, near Tobolski; and, indeed, he possessed a physiognomy and manner different from that of Europeans, and highly characteristic of his country.

His conversation was full of fire, point and energy; and, although not polished, he was good humoured, frank and generous. He complained that he could not endure the habits of civilized life, and that his health began to be impaired as soon as he became quiet, and was comfortably fed and lodged. He said he must soon "be off again" into the wilderness. His health was then declining, and unfortunately it was but too apparent, that *some* of the measures to which he resorted to sustain it, must eventually prostrate his remaining vigour.

It is to be hoped that his unfinished labours will not be lost, and that although incomplete, they may be published; since, if sufficiently matured, they must add to the stock of knowledge.

Foreign Science.

ANIMAL MAGNETISM.

About thirty years ago, father Hehl, of Vienna, imposed on his countrymen, and indeed on the greater part of the civilized world, a pretended mode of curing all kinds of disease, by means of a sympathetic affection between the sick person and the operator. The remedy was supposed to depend upon the motion of the fingers and the features of the latter: he placed himself immediately before the invalid, whose eyes were to be fixed on his, and performing a number of antic and unmeaning changes, accompanied by various grimaces, or inflections of the principal muscles of the visage. This rarely failed to excite a certain degree of apprehension in the mind of the sick; which by creating a new action in the system, often frightened them into convalescence. That such effects may have been produced among the credulous and timid, we shall not controvert; but on the other hand it is asserted, that numbers have been so far overcome with terror and fatigue (for like Dr. Sangrado the operator was never satisfied while any strength to undergo the process remained), that consequences highly dangerous, and in some instances fatal, were induced. Notwithstanding the obvious folly of the pursuit, there were found many gentlemen of great respectability and talents among its followers; hence a certain degree of credit was established, and there were not wanting persons foolish enough to certify many cases, and to give a celebrity which was in a very short time found to be misapplied. It is a lamentable case that impositions of this nature are tolerated long enough to answer the purpose of the fabricator and to encourage others in similar deceptions. Our readers may recollect many instances of notorious character, amongst which the metallic tractors, which were at one time asserted to be allied to metallic magnetism, perhaps may serve as an illustration and proof.

[*Nicholson's Encyc.*

Annual quantity of Salt raised from the bowels of the Earth in Europe.—It would appear from a careful examination of the most accurate returns, that the European salt mines and salt springs, afford annually from twenty-five to thirty millions of hundred weights of salt. [*Edinb. Phil. Journ.*

Patent Machine Paper of J. & T. Gilpin, Brandywine.

Clark & Raser, Printers.